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ABSTRACT

The post-Cold War era has seen a rise in the number of international peacekeeping operations undertaken by the world community. The US has several vital and important interests involved in maintaining a cooperative relationship with Russia. While the current relationship is somewhat tense, one of the most promising ways to improve the overall strategic relationship is through cooperation in peacekeeping efforts. This paper seeks to answer questions concerning Russian peacekeeping forces, training, equipment, and doctrine. Furthermore, it examines what areas the US can most effectively use resources to enhance cooperation in peacekeeping.

This paper uses two case studies to further analyze Russian peacekeeping forces. It looks at Russian involvement in case of participation in an international operation, IFOR/SFOR, and then a case of involvement in the near abroad, Abkhazia, with a low level of UN supervision. The authors then provide specific recommendations for operations in Bosnia and Abkhazia as well as overall recommendations for improving US-Russian relations in peacekeeping operations in the future.

Improving US-Russian Relations through Peacekeeping Operations

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The post-Cold War era has seen a rise in the number of international peacekeeping operations undertaken by the world community. While these missions have often consumed the world's attention, the US-Russian relationship still plays a crucial role in world affairs. This paper seeks to answer three main questions:

1. *Can relations between the US and Russia be improved through combined peacekeeping operations and support for Russian peacekeeping in the near abroad?*
2. *In what areas can the US most effectively use resources to enhance cooperation in peacekeeping?*
3. *What actions should the US take to initiate or improve relations in these areas?*

1. COOPERATION IN PEACEKEEPING

The US has several vital and important interests involved in maintaining a cooperative relationship with Russia. While the current relationship is somewhat tense, one of the most promising ways to improve the overall strategic relationship is through cooperation in peacekeeping efforts. These efforts provide an opportunity for higher level political figures to interact and allow the US and Russia to promote their mutual interests.

2. ASSESSMENT OF RUSSIAN PEACEKEEPING

To find the areas where the US can most effectively use its resources to enhance cooperation in peacekeeping, this paper assesses: 1) where Russia is most likely to participate, 2) Russian peacekeeping training and equipment, 3) Russian peacekeeping doctrine, 4) a case of participation in an international operation, Bosnia, and 5) a case of involvement in the near abroad with a low level of UN supervision, Abkhazia.

Participation: Russia's economic and political situation limit them to participation in peacekeeping missions in the near abroad, the Balkans, and, to a limited extent, UN operations.

Training and Equipment: The training Russian forces receive for these missions is adequate, but their equipment is outdated and poorly maintained.

Doctrine: Russian peacekeeping doctrine, at least in practice, differs from US doctrine in three areas: 1) a greater propensity to use force, 2) an often-times partial approach to promote Russian interests, and 3) the inclusion of combatants in the peacekeeping force.

Performance in Bosnia: As an example of Russian participation in combined operations with the US under NATO auspices, Bosnia shows that Russian troops perform adequately. The major issues in Russian performance include setting up a mutually agreeable command and control structure, questions of Russian partiality and lack of professionalism, equipment and maintenance problems, and language and cultural barriers.

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Performance in Abkhazia: In Abkhazia, Russian forces act under CIS auspices with UN supervision. They perform the minimum task of maintaining stability reasonably well, partly because of their heavy-handed approach. Russian troops have frequently acted with partiality towards the Abkhaz, and have been unable or unwilling to completely fulfill their mandate to provide a secure environment and to facilitate the return of refugees.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The US has an opportunity to improve the overall strategic relationship with Russia by improving cooperation in the Balkans and finding areas to support Russian peacekeeping in the near abroad.

Bosnia

The US should seek to improve cooperation and communication in Bosnia by: increasing the number of LNO's (liaison officers) to the Russian Brigade, including a Russian Representative in PfP command post exercises, and restarting the combined patrolling missions that the Russian and US troops perform. To reduce cultural misunderstandings and break down language barriers, the US should set aside more time to brief incoming American commanders (down through platoon leaders and NCO's) and develop phrase books on various differences in military culture, terminology, and procedures.

Abkhazia

The US can support Russian peacekeeping in the near abroad by allowing American UN observers more freedom to travel in the conflict region and increasing their interactions with CIS peacekeeping forces. The US should also encourage and support other CIS nations, such as the Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Georgia, to take a more active role in CIS peacekeeping missions, bolstering the CIS and improving its peacekeeping capabilities and legitimacy.

OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations can improve the US-Russian relationship in the context of any type of peacekeeping operation:

- 1) Define the circle of participants in the operational planning of multinational peacekeeping operations by the level or amount of their participation.
- 2) Restart educational exchanges between US and Russian military personnel.
- 3) Perform combined exercises of staff level officers under the established PfP program.
- 4) Improve Russian language and cultural expertise among US officers.
- 5) Increase cultural training for officers and NCOs assigned to work with Russian units.
- 6) Give more credit to Russia for its peacekeeping operations in recognition of improved performance in desired areas.

COOPERATION IN PEACEKEEPING

INTRODUCTION

More than a decade after the Cold War, the US-Russian relationship maintains a fundamental position in international affairs. Due to the important roles of both countries, the US must seek ways to improve its relationship with Russia. The election of a new Russian president provides a good opportunity to work on US-Russian relations. One of the key areas where cooperation is feasible is in peacekeeping efforts, which play an important role in the post-Cold War world. By cooperating with Russia in combined peacekeeping, as in Bosnia and Kosovo, and providing support for Russian peacekeeping efforts in the near abroad¹, as in Georgia, the US has the opportunity to improve the overall strategic relationship.

This paper provides recommendations for improving combined peacekeeping and supporting Russian efforts in their near abroad by answering three main questions:

4. *Can relations between the US and Russia be improved through combined peacekeeping operations and support for Russian peacekeeping in the near abroad?*
5. *In what areas can the US most effectively use resources to enhance cooperation in peacekeeping?*
6. *What actions should the US take to initiate or improve relations in these areas?*

The paper begins by analyzing the significance of US-Russian relations and the impact combined peacekeeping and support for Russian peacekeeping efforts has on the US-Russian relationship. After examining the importance of cooperation in peacekeeping, the paper then assesses Russian peacekeeping policy and forces to determine the quality and nature of Russian peacekeeping and where it will most likely be applied in the future. The paper looks at two case studies, Bosnia and Abkhazia (Georgia), to evaluate Russian peacekeeping in each of the two main peacekeeping arenas where Russia is likely to engage: combined operations in the Balkans and Commonwealth of Independent States' (CIS) activities in the near abroad. Using insights from each of these cases, the paper looks at ways to find where the US is able and would most benefit from providing support for Russian peacekeeping. Based on this assessment, the paper recommends specific courses of action to improve cooperation within combined peacekeeping and support for peacekeeping in the near abroad, as well as the most robust recommendations that can be applied across both arenas in order to improve relations.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE US-RUSSIAN RELATIONSHIP

While the relationship between Russia and the US has deteriorated over the past five years, the importance of the relationship remains evident because of Russia's great nuclear strength and size. Many scholars argue that the future of a reforming Russia, if not handled correctly, is one of the greatest threats to US national interests.² Although the effectiveness of its military equipment continues to diminish, Russia maintains significant military might and influence, with its vast nuclear arsenal and its military

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dominance over the former Soviet states. In addition, there are a number of issues of concern to national security shared by both Russia and the United States. Transnational problems such as proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism can best be solved through a cooperative relationship between the two countries. Given Russia's significant position in global affairs and their ability to influence and assist proliferating nations, an uncooperative relationship would be detrimental to US national security.

At the end of the Cold War, Russia and the United States had high expectations for a close, cooperative partnership to be achieved. Russia looked to the US to provide economic support and advice for its developing democracy, and the US sought cooperation on nuclear drawdown and security and other transnational issues. At the height of this partnership was the success of the Cooperative Threat Reduction program (CTR) to draw down and secure nuclear forces and the successful agreement incorporating Russia into the peacekeeping force sent to implement the Dayton Accords in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Relations between NATO and Russia also took a positive turn in May 1997 with the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation. The Founding Act established the Permanent Joint Council made up of NATO countries and Russia. The act provides a mechanism for consultation, coordination and, where appropriate, for joint decisions and actions with respect to security issues of common concern.³ The Founding Act places Russia at a higher status with NATO than other non-NATO countries in the Partnership for Peace program (PfP).

Since the initial successful cooperation between the US and Russia in Bosnia, the relationship has deteriorated. Russia's dismal economy, due in part to poor advice from the West and disillusionment with democracy, coupled with their perception of a hostile, expanding NATO and the West's treatment of them as a secondary power, has led to distrust and a state of non-cooperation. While discussion on START III has increased, the US and Russia frequently disagree over START II and the ABM treaty. Deeply engulfed in the Chechnya conflict, Russia resents Western, and particularly US, criticism over their methods of waging war and has increased its anti-West and anti-NATO rhetoric. The US, for its part, has chosen not to give Russia a place at the table in NATO and has been reluctant to provide any further support for Russia's transition to a free market, while at the same time pursuing a national missile defense that has greatly upset Russia. The relationship with Russia is judged by many to be at a post-Cold War low, with little hope for improvement.

However, recent political changes inside Russia have provided the US and Russia with an opportunity to expand relations. There remains a high level of uncertainty as to what type of reform measures will be undertaken by the new president. Many believe the presidential election of Vladimir Putin will serve as a window of opportunity to improve bilateral relations, as well as Russian relations with the rest of Western Europe. President Putin commented on his desire to work with NATO as "equal

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partners” after a year of tensions over issues such as Kosovo and Chechnya.⁴ Putin enjoys a high level of domestic support from the Russian people that will allow him to be forward looking in shaping the future of Russia’s economy and security, and the US should seize the opportunity to reinvigorate the post-Cold War cooperation.

IMPROVING THE US-RUSSIAN RELATIONSHIP THROUGH PEACEKEEPING

Given the significance of the US-Russian relationship, the present tension, and the election of a new Russian president, the US should look for areas to improve this relationship. The recent increase in peace operations in the second post-Cold War era provides the US and Russia just such an opportunity. Russia has and continues to be an important player in these operations in the Balkans, its near abroad, and UN missions worldwide. With a lack of more conventional threats, peacekeeping operations are the most visible and likely way to increase cooperation between US and Russian forces.

Currently, the US and Russia are successfully working together in SFOR in Bosnia, KFOR in Kosovo, and, to a lesser extent, in several UN missions. Having these two former Cold War enemies working side by side in peacekeeping operations has shown the world the professionalism and capabilities of both military forces⁵ and has had several benefits for the strategic relationship. The more often the two militaries are able to operate together, the more likely they will be able to close both operational and cultural gaps that hamper successful missions. For example, US Brigadier General Peterson attributes much of his successful cooperation with the Russian troops in the beginning of KFOR’s establishment to his working with the Russians in Bosnia and thus understanding their peacekeeping forces and doctrine.⁶ If the two countries are to work together in future peacekeeping efforts or other low intensity conflicts, then well-planned and efficient operations today will aid in effective operations in the future.

The interaction between the two militaries in peacekeeping operations provides an area of engagement between higher political figures. Regardless of other events affecting the relationship, involvement in peacekeeping operations offers, at a bare minimum, a reason for interaction because both nations are committed to a number of peacekeeping operations. While there are often disagreements over political issues that may be harmful to the relationship, it is nevertheless important that dialogue occurs and there is a continued agreement on the involvement of the two countries.

US-Russian cooperation provides a special degree of impartiality and legitimacy to the peacekeeping operation, whether real or perceived, in the world arena. Joint involvement gives both sides a greater chance of being accepted as part of an impartial peacekeeping force. This is particularly important to the US in the NATO-led operations in Bosnia and Kosovo because it dampens criticism of Western partiality and heavy-handedness. Coming together as the two world superpowers once diametrically opposed during the Cold War, the US and Russia provide a sense of legitimacy and commitment to resolve the conflict. This show of commitment will encourage more hesitant nations to

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participate in peacekeeping activities when they might otherwise choose not to, and it will increase the potential threat to any party opposing the peacekeeping action.

In addition to being important for the US-Russian relationship, cooperation in peacekeeping efforts in the Balkans and the near abroad helps the US protect and promote its interests in those areas. The Balkans continue to be a flash point for European security. The US already has a strong commitment in the region, with troops in peacekeeping operations in both Bosnia and Kosovo. Considering the US ties with Europe, developing and maintaining peace in the Balkans is of great importance to the US. Conflicts in the Balkans threaten not only mass atrocities and large refugee flows, but also a possible spread of the conflict into the rest of Europe.

US interests in the near abroad do not justify as strong a commitment of resources as in the Balkans. For the most part, recent US policy in Russia's near abroad has been to offer economic and political support for birthing democracies, while acknowledging Russia's prominence in the region and encouraging them to solve some of the crises left behind when the Soviet Union broke apart. Russia's suspicion of US designs on the region has caused the US to defer to Russian prerogatives on many occasions. However, while they should not be overstated, the US does have several interests in the near abroad that should be protected: (1) preventing the conflicts from spreading into neighboring countries such as Turkey, which is a NATO ally, or Iran and growing into larger conflagrations, (2) helping these new countries develop strong democracies and free market economies where the rights of the citizens are respected and opportunities for investment are protected, (3) securing the developing Transcausasus oil pipeline, and (4) ensuring that the peacekeeping missions carried out respect the human rights of the inhabitants. These interests in the near abroad must be balanced with the implications any US actions will have on the US-Russia relationship.

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Although combined peacekeeping efforts and support for Russian peacekeeping will benefit the US-Russian strategic relationship, the US must balance this interest with its interest in successfully accomplishing its peacekeeping tasks. The US must therefore assess Russian peacekeeping to decide what areas of cooperation in peacekeeping efforts would be most beneficial for achieving US objectives, both to improve the relationship and ensure the success and legitimacy of the peacekeeping operation. This assessment analyzes the Russian political environment, forces, and doctrine for peacekeeping operations.

Russian Political Environment

Russian Goals and Objectives in Peacekeeping Activities

Russia's involvement in peacekeeping activities stems from its national interests and the perceived threats to those interests. According to the Russian Federation National Security Concept, the basic external threats to Russian national security are due to, among other factors:

1. the danger of a weakening of Russia's political, economic and military influence in the world;
2. the appearance and escalation of conflicts near the Russian state border and CIS external borders; and
3. an attempt to minimize the role of existing mechanisms for ensuring international security, above all the United Nations and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).⁷

These threats provide the rationale for Russia's involvement in peacekeeping in the near abroad, the Balkans, and UN operations under UN, CIS, or OSCE auspices.

Since the demise of the Soviet Union, one of Russia's primary security concerns has been to demonstrate to the rest of the international community that it remains a powerful state and will play an important role in the "new world order." As part of this effort, Russian leaders actively seek a peacekeeping role for their military. Involvement in peacekeeping is seen as necessary if Russia is to continue to maintain significant influence and prestige in the international community.⁸ Russia's participation in peacekeeping operations in the near abroad, the Balkans, and within the UN illustrates its desire to be a contributing member of the world community.

Another of Russia's primary security concerns is to contain any threat that appears on its borders. These conflicts in former Soviet states have occurred frequently in recent years as a result of a decline in the population's standard of living and as a result of ethnic, interreligious and other conflicts.⁹ Russia often gets involved in these conflicts because no other security apparatus is willing or available to take on the mission and the conflicts threaten to spill over into Russian territory or endanger the Russian population in the state.

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Russia also has an interest in maintaining its influence in these regions. Peacekeeping forces allow Russia to maintain their influence, as well as their military bases, in these former Soviet states, thus providing an arena to shape the region and maintain access to natural resources. The Russian forces in the near abroad act under CIS auspices so that they appear more legitimate to the rest of the international community, though, for the most part, only a negligible amount of forces from other CIS nations ever participate in these missions. Although Russia maintains that it becomes involved in peacekeeping efforts on CIS territory at the request of other CIS states seeking Russia's assistance in settling the conflict,¹⁰ it has been accused of strong-arming these nations into accepting peacekeeping forces. This quite possibly happened in the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, where Georgia was left with little choice but to join the CIS and accept a CIS peacekeeping force that thus ensured continued Russian presence in the country.¹¹ One of the primary reasons Russia pursues zealous peacekeeping forms and mechanisms in the UN and regional organizations is to support these interventions in the near abroad with a conceptual, legal and practical framework. The actual peacekeeping mandates in the near abroad demonstrate that Russia is focused on keeping the conflict to a minimum and is less likely to pursue more ambitious objectives to resolve the crisis and thus remove the need for Russian troop presence.

Further threats to Russian security stem from Russian perceptions of NATO's actions in Kosovo. According to the Russian National Security Concept, "NATO's transition to the practice of military operations of force without UN Security Council (UNSC) sanction is fraught with the threat of destabilizing the entire strategic situation in the world."¹² While the working relationship between NATO and Russian forces in SFOR and KFOR remains on a successful and steady path, Russian policy maintains that it is not willing to transform its equipment and safety procedures to NATO standards of operating. Therefore, according to the primary Russian military representative to the UN, Russia will not look to participate in any further joint operations with NATO.¹³ However, as mentioned previously, President Putin has expressed a willingness to cooperate with NATO as long as Russia was considered an equal partner in the operation.¹⁴ This may be seen as encouragement that Russia is willing to work through some of the difficulties and compromise to enhance NATO-Russian cooperation.

Together, the Russian security interests and threats to those interests have led Russia to focus its foreign policy on strengthening key mechanisms for multilateral management of world political and economic processes and keeping Russian assistance in settling conflicts under the aegis of the UN, OSCE, or CIS.¹⁵ Russia has been particularly interested in strengthening the UNSC, where it has veto power, and in receiving UN mandates and money for its CIS peacekeeping forces in the near abroad.

Russian Military in the Political Forum

The military plays a significant role in Russian politics. Recent military operations like Kosovo and Chechnya provide examples of the type of pressure ranking military generals are able to put on

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politicians. In November 1999, Russian generals were pressing publicly for an all-out military victory against Chechen rebels, and in “unusually strident fashion warning Russian politicians to get out of the way.”¹⁶ In interviews, Russian commanders stated that they would not be robbed of their victory as politicians had allowed in 1996. General Anatoli Kvashin, Chief of the Russian General Staff, threatened to resign when President Yelstin’s administration proposed sending out peace feelers to Aslan Maskhadov, the Chechen leader. General Vladimir Shamanov, commander of the western group of forces in Chechnya, warned that if an order came down from Moscow “to stop the army, there would be a massive defection of officers of all ranks from the armed forces, including generals.”¹⁷

A similar situation arose in June of 1999 when some 200 Russian troops left their post in Bosnia and headed into Kosovo, taking over the Pristina airport. This move forced the rest of the international community to face the frightening possibility that Russia’s military, which has been under-funded and humiliated for years, may now be forcing the Kremlin to bend to its views.¹⁸ To many, the fact that the Russian military was able to “bypass most of the country’s top civilian decision makers shows that Yelstin has a new set of favorites – Russian generals with a bleak view of the outside world and its designs.”¹⁹ For the US, this military influence on political affairs makes cooperation with the Russian military even more important for improving security relations.

Russian Peacekeeping Forces

Since the Cold War, the Russian military has been in turmoil. While the US forces underwent a significant draw down in the 1990’s, the Russian military cutbacks have been described as a virtual freefall.²⁰ Their forces went from numbering 4.3 million active duty personnel in 1986 to 1.27 million in 1996.²¹ Along with force cutbacks has come an enormous drop in military expenditures. In 1999, the military was allocated \$3.7 billion, or 2.3% of Russia’s GDP, down almost \$2 billion from the original presidential decision of \$5.6 billion, but it failed to receive even that amount.²² This underfunding has caused severe payment delays and underfunding of defense sector needs, thus undermining military training programs, research and design projects, production and supplies of new types of military equipment, and the maintenance and repair of equipment in service.²³ With the current state of the Russian military, any peacekeeping effort is certain to be challenged by insufficient funding, a lack of training, outdated equipment and poor equipment maintenance, and morale problems due to payment arrears and other personnel issues.

Although it suffers from great financial problems, the Russian military maintains two different types of training for peacekeeping forces: UN peacekeepers and the airborne and motorized rifle divisions designated for deployment to peacekeeping operations. Those going to participate as UN observers must be trained at the Vystrel Academy near Moscow for a period of two to three months. The Academy trains three groups of students per year using UN doctrine and guidelines for training its forces.²⁴ According to

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US General John Reppert, former defense attaché to Moscow, this is one of the only academies of its sort with this type of extensive training using completely UN materials.²⁵ The school is taught in English and includes exchange students from several nations, including the US, although currently there are no US students there. It has both political and military faculty, often bringing in foreigners to help teach UN practices. The UN observers produced by the Vystrel Academy have been noted as quality participants in UN peacekeeping operations. Russia has recently designated two battalions and their required support structure to be at the UN's disposal.²⁶

The forces Russia uses for other peacekeeping situations (working with NATO, the CIS, or unilaterally) are led by the Airborne Forces (VDV). VDV forces are equipped with light armor, are deployable by standard military transport aviation, and have maintained a high level of discipline, training, and combat experience.²⁷ The peacekeeping environment corresponds to the VDV's wartime mission to work far in enemy rear areas cut off from main lines of logistical support and to learn to deal with the local populace.²⁸ As Commander of the VDV, Colonel-General Shpak has designated unilateral and multilateral peacekeeping as their main peacetime mission and has put his effort towards the development of command, control and intelligence systems and the maintenance of discipline and effectiveness at the small unit level.²⁹ The Russian airborne divisions have better training and mobility than most of the Russian troops, though they suffer from logistics problems and have not been able to maintain their units at full strength. Along with the VDV, Russia has designated two motorized rifle divisions (MRD's) for service in peacekeeping operations. Officers sent to peacekeeping missions receive three months of training prior to deployment, while enlisted troops receive six months of training.³⁰ The training program gives considerable attention "to preparing personnel for independent actions in an environment and in situations where use of weapons is prohibited."³¹

Unlike the conflict in Chechnya, Russia uses only volunteer soldiers for its peacekeeping missions. While personnel have for the most part been sufficiently trained for their missions, many of the other essentials for a successful mission have been lacking. The units are often at low strength when called upon, as in the example of Georgia when the 145th Motorized Rifle Division was called to provide forces for the Abkhazia conflict and it only had 3,000 of its allotted 13,000 troops.³² When the troops do arrive, they often lack the necessary equipment to complete their assigned task, as in the case of the taking of the Pristina airport when the Russian troops were soon asking the British troops for water.³³ Russian equipment is old and the military's ability to maintain it often inadequate, with the result that many of their vehicles and machinery are simply unusable. The Russian forces, though capable, are hampered by insufficient finances and outdated equipment.

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Russian Peacekeeping Doctrine

The Russian peacekeeping doctrine springs from its experience in the field. Russia's peacekeeping experiences are much different from that of most other nations, bearing the characteristics more of counter-insurgency operations than peacekeeping operations.³⁴ Russian operations have differed from typical peacekeeping operations in several ways. Current Russian peacekeeping doctrine was developed by Russia's initial experience after the Cold War. First, all of Russia's operations were in "Russia's backyard," where Russia is the strongest player in the region and the military commanders are very familiar with the environment. Second, Russian activities were not constrained by anything besides the available means, the resolve of the command in Moscow, and political infighting or indecisiveness.³⁵ Problems of legitimacy, rules of engagement, collateral damage, and public scrutiny were raised but did not have a significant effect on operations as compared to most UN operations.³⁶ A third difference is that indecisiveness, and at times incompetence, of political leadership often forced or allowed local military commanders to act autonomously with little guidance or support.³⁷ These differences have led to a uniquely Russian view of peacekeeping operations that looks at the issue as primarily a military rather than political problem and does not get involved in creating a political solution.

The Russian term most often used for peacekeeping operations is "miro-tvorcheskiye operatzii," or peace-creation operations, showing Russia's penchant towards a greater use of force in keeping the peace. Russia is currently in the process of developing a new military doctrine for peacekeeping. According to Lieutenant-General Meleshkov, the Russian military representative to the UN Military Staff Committee, this policy breaks peacekeeping into three main tasks: (1) separate the warring parties, (2) ensure provision of humanitarian aid and evacuation of refugees, and (3) carry out the provisions of the mandate.³⁸ The Russians do not use a doctrine that complies with the three UN principles of consent and invitation of all parties, impartiality, and use of force only in self-defense.³⁹ Instead, their actions more resemble the criteria put forth by former UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali in his *Agenda for Peace*: the peacekeeping force may intervene without the consent of all parties, the force does not necessarily seek to be impartial, and offensive use of weapons may be required.⁴⁰

While Russia's peacekeeping methods derive naturally from some of their experiences in the field, the West has often criticized Russian methods. Three main issues cause frequent conflict between the Russian and Western philosophies of peacekeeping: (1) Russia's extensive use of force, (2) criticisms of Russian partiality, and (3) the use of belligerents in the peacekeeping force.

1. Extensive Use of Force: The Russian doctrine allows for the use of force to separate belligerents and force them to the negotiating table, a different approach than that of the UN, which requires the consent of all the parties to the conflict.⁴¹ This approach is more similar to the Western concept of peace-enforcement. Former commander of the 14th Army, Colonel-General Aleksandr Lebed,

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describes the necessary approach this way: “If a decision is made to use troops, they must be employed decisively, firmly, and without delay. And it must be clear to everyone that a force has arrived capable of putting every insolent, encroaching bandit in his place.”⁴² While this doctrine allows for the more frequent and heavy-handed use of force, it is not that different from the direction the international community is headed in peace operations such as Kosovo. It allows Russia, a far superior force to those in its near abroad, to come in and force the two sides to reach an agreement. Indeed, Russia has shown great restraint in its use of force in the past. According to US Lieutenant Colonel Tom Wilhelm, in Tajikistan “the Russians had the means of overwhelming force- tanks, helicopters, and fighter aircraft; they never brought them to bear in any decisive manner, choosing instead to try to secure through consecutive diplomatic summits a peacekeeping force in accordance with internationally-recognized norms and standards.”⁴³ The danger in the approach of using force to separate belligerents is when it is combined with the second criticism of Russian forces—partiality.

2. Partiality: Russia has been frequently accused of showing partiality in a conflict in accordance with the interests of the RF. In several cases, the Russian government has forced local authorities into compromise to allow the deployment of Russian peacekeeping forces or manipulated local groups to obtain settlement terms favorable to Russian interests.⁴⁴ Russia’s interests in the near abroad often cause it to take a somewhat less than neutral role in conflicts. However, the US is often considered a partial force in conflicts such as Haiti or Kosovo, and its interests are often a driving factor. While Russia’s ultimate goal is almost always to settle the conflict, it also uses the situation to promote its policy interests, as in the case of Abkhazia where it pressured Georgia to join the CIS.⁴⁵ At times, Russian forces have played a direct role in some conflicts. They provide weapons to belligerents, carry out punitive strikes against local forces, or perform other actions favoring one side over another.⁴⁶ In many regions, even if the Russians acted impartially, it would be difficult for the belligerents to accept them as an impartial force because of their history in the region. This is certainly the case in Georgia, where Russia aided both the Abkhazians and the Georgians at different times during the fighting, making it impossible for the Russians to be regarded as impartial.⁴⁷ In several cases, Russian partiality, whether real or perceived, has harmed the peacekeeping mission. However, Russia’s appearance as impartial has often been helped by its inclusion of the belligerents in the peacekeeping force.

3. Use of belligerents in peacekeeping forces: In Russian peacekeeping doctrine, direct control of peacekeeping forces in a region is exercised by a joint staff composed of representatives from Russian forces as well as the combatants in the conflict zone.⁴⁸ These forces take part in policing the zone of separation and other activities.⁴⁹ The UN and NATO do not have any legal agreement on belligerent participation, but it has generally not been a part of traditional peace operations. Including belligerents may put peacekeeping forces at risk of being caught in the middle of renewed fighting, but it also may

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have the benefit of creating cooperation between the parties, allowing for an eventual opportunity for the third party to slowly withdraw its forces.⁵⁰ Russians believe that combatant participation has the potential to build relationships and mechanisms for resolving future conflicts.⁵¹

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Russian peacekeeping forces and doctrine can best be analyzed in terms of their actual participation in peace operations. Looking at the Russian forces in the light of a multinational operation, Bosnia, provides an opportunity to see how they perform within a UN/NATO framework. This will analysis of how their participation in combined peacekeeping efforts, particularly within the NATO structure, can be improved. The case of Russian troops in Bosnia was selected because of the wealth of information available. In addition, the length of the mission allows for more thorough analysis of the case. The second case study will look at the operation in Abkhazia, Georgia, to analyze Russian performance in the near abroad under the CIS aegis in coordination with UN military observers. Since Russia's priority is to maintain stability along its borders, it is more likely to be involved first in operations in its near abroad before involving itself in peacekeeping efforts elsewhere. Abkhazia was selected because of the interaction between CIS forces and UN observers.

These case studies provide the framework for our recommendations to improve combined operations and support for Russian peacekeeping efforts in the near abroad.

Case Study of Bosnia (IFOR/SFOR)

On 14 December 1995, the Bosnia Peace Agreement was signed in Paris, after its negotiation in Dayton, Ohio. On 16 December, NATO launched the largest military operation ever undertaken by the Alliance, Operation Joint Endeavor. NATO was given a mandate to implement the military aspects of the agreement based on UN Security Council Resolution 1031. Although NATO-led, the multinational force (IFOR) included 16 non-NATO nations. IFOR was given a one-year mandate and began its operations on 20 December 1995.⁵² As a part of IFOR, The Russian Brigade (RUSBDE) operated as one of the five maneuver brigades under Task Force Eagle, led by an American commander. The RUSBDE area of responsibility covers 1,750 square kilometers.

Following the peaceful conduct of the September 1996 elections, IFOR successfully completed its missions. In November and December 1996, NATO foreign and defense ministers concluded that a military presence, although reduced, would be needed in Bosnia. Therefore, NATO created SFOR (Operation Joint Guard), which was activated 20 December 1996, the date the IFOR mandate expired.

Currently, SFOR operates under Chapter VII of the UN Charter (peace enforcement).⁵³ SFOR has the same rules of engagement as IFOR, with the "robust use of force", as it is necessary to accomplish the mission and protect the forces.⁵⁴ SFOR's size is approximately half the size of IFOR, at just under 32,000 troops. It presently includes 1,500 Russian airborne troops and is a member of the Partnership for Peace program.

Including the Russians in IFOR

The decision to include Russian forces in the operation in Bosnia was plagued with a number of difficult political and military issues. While both governments felt Russian participation was necessary, overcoming command issues proved troublesome. The possible role of Russian troops ranged from various “special operations” tasks such as engineering, transport, and construction, to full fledged peacekeepers.⁵⁵ Eventually it was decided, due to political constraints, that Russian forces, acting in their own area within the US sector, would be placed under American General George Joulwan acting as Commander of US Forces in Europe, not under NATO. Another issue that almost prevented Russian involvement in IFOR involved who maintained operational control and tactical control. Operational control refers to the selection of tasks a given unit is assigned, while tactical control refers to the daily orders to do something or go somewhere called for by the operational control tasks. Since the Russians were most concerned with operational control, it would be necessary to develop a solution that allowed the Russians to maintain operational control, while still giving the US commander tactical control. Therefore, the chain of command needed to be re-defined by separating tactical control and operational control. Russian General Shevtsov and General Joulwan were able to create such a solution by placing the Russian troops under tactical control of the Multi-National Division Commander, in this case an American, while operational control remained in the hands of Russian General Shetsov as General Joulwan’s Deputy Commander for Russian Forces.⁵⁶

The ability to resolve these issues of the military command and control structure made it possible to avoid a political disaster. This was due in large part to the defense-to-defense cooperation. In the few years leading up to IFOR, Secretary Perry and Minister Grachev established a working relationship, which, when combined with the relationship between General Joulwan and General Shevtsov, made it possible to win support within a critical constituency: the militaries themselves.⁵⁷

Training for Combined Operations in IFOR

Combined troop training is vital for the military and political success of a peacekeeping contingent. Prior to the Dayton Accords, US and Russian troops had engaged in two Field Training Exercises (FTX): one in Totsk, Russia, in 1994, and one in Ft. Riley, Kansas, in 1995. The pre-deployment phase of the train-up began on 17 November 1995. Elements of the Russian force were brought into the planning process in Germany. Training of the Russian forces was conducted within the parent divisions of the Airborne Troops. Their training was conducted in accordance with the operative rules and regulations, the Guidelines for the RF Armed Forces Actions as UN Troops, and the training program for the peacekeeping units of the Airborne Troops.⁵⁸

There were a variety of additional components in the training of the Russian peacekeeping forces devoted to unconventional actions in emergency situations. This included working with professional

psychologists in order to determine good psychological compatibility in forming squads and teams. Only personnel with six months in service were selected for the brigade.⁵⁹ Approximately forty percent of the personnel were combat veterans.⁶⁰ Legal training was also strongly emphasized with legal briefings and consultations with international lawyers. This training provided a basis for understanding international legal standards for Russian personnel.

One specific joint training event, the participation of Russian officers in the command post exercise conducted in the 1st Armored Division in Germany, is often noted as one exercise that increased the ability of the two militaries to work together in the multinational operation. During this exercise, Russian officers, in concert with their American counterparts, were able to clarify certain details of the joint tasks and define the situation in the conflict zone in greater detail.⁶¹ Types of combined peacekeeping force training, including firing exercises, seminars, and sharing of experiences and lessons learned, has continued throughout the operation, though the amount depends on Russia's ability to finance the training.

Once IFOR was established, a high level of cooperation continued as the forces were deployed. American and Russian forces worked together in the areas of air and ground logistics. Since both the US and Russia utilize air and rail transportation for the deployment of troops, such coordination is essential and, if handled properly, can help avoid early problems in performing this massive task. A Russian liaison officer in Vicenza, Italy, coordinated air movement. Russian officers also helped to coordinate movement of rail with the Movement Control Center of NATO. These initial actions of coordination in both training and deployment of forces set the stage for a fairly cohesive combined peacekeeping force.

Working with the Russian Brigade

Upon arrival in Bosnia, cooperation between Major General William Nash, Commander of the US sector (Task Force Eagle), and his Russian counterparts continued, as it does today. Both Russian and US military leaders have been insistent upon developing, planning, and carrying out a robust series of combined exercises within the Bosnian area of operations. Cooperation on the ground is evident as US troops have provided fire support for Russian platoons, while Russian units have served as a covering force for US infantry.⁶²

The majority of duties assigned to the forces relate to the show of force, blockades and the armed presence of forces in conflict regions. The most common task of ground forces is patrolling in the area of responsibility. These patrolling missions, consisting of ten to fifteen soldiers, were designed to investigate the areas beyond the limits of control posts in the base areas, demonstrate IFOR/SFOR presence, gather information, and protect freedom of movement. Ground troops are also used in escorting representatives from various international organizations helping to resolve the conflict. In addition to each country doing patrols independently, Russian and US troops performed combined patrols. The

frequency of these patrols ranged from once a week to once a month. Intelligence and counter-intelligence operations are planned and conducted in order to support these tasks. However, due to political fallout over the NATO bombing of Serbia, combined patrolling has been halted.

Problems in Working with the Russian Brigade

Although the Russians serve a larger strategic purpose in Bosnia, differences in operating procedures, language, military cultures, and equipment continue to create tension in the working relationship of soldiers in the daily operations of SFOR. At the operational level, the command and control system was often ineffective and inefficient. Due to the large size of the force and the many participating countries, operation participants, in a study conducted by the Foreign Military Studies Office, discussing the initial format of IFOR noted that:

Individual elements of this design must be optimized to emphasize the following: the unique features of multi-national cooperation; the scope and complexity of the MNF missions; the quantity of information and operations documents developed and used for troops; command and control; and troop coordination.⁶³

Due to the newly established command structure, military-political tasks were to be carried out upon coordination with the Deputy SACEUR for the Russian Contingent, leaving for discussion whether a significant number of orders were narrow tactical or military-political issues. This problem caused the Russian Brigade to react more slowly to orders and caused friction between the command of the Russian Brigade and higher headquarters, especially on politically sensitive issues. Another reason for slow reaction to headquarter commands arose from the need of the US liaison officers (LNO's) to interpret the tasks for the Russian commander. While American officers are used to generating "implied tasks" from verbal orders, the Russian forces were often confused and spent a great deal of time having the LNO call back and forth to MND(N) to get the order refined to list each specific item in great detail.⁶⁴

The sharing of intelligence is another often-cited concern. Russian and American military personnel jointly collected, exchanged, and processed intelligence information in their zone of responsibility, thus allowing the sharing of information and experiences between the two forces.⁶⁵ The sharing of such information between groups allowed both groups to become more aware of events in the sector without duplication of effort. Currently, the sharing of intelligence between US and Russian forces has decreased due to mistrust developed during NATO's bombing of Serbia in 1999.⁶⁶

Before the deployment of IFOR, many politicians and military commanders doubted the ability of the Russian troops to remain impartial in Bosnia due to the Russian reputation in peacekeeping activities elsewhere. Measures were taken to ensure the impartiality of the Russian contingent by placing one of the Russian battalions in Serb territory and the other in the Muslim region.⁶⁷ To many that worked with the Russians, they were considered to be just as impartial to the warring factions as any part of Task Force

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Eagle. General Nash points out that during an incident in the Russian area of responsibility where Bosnian Serbs were behaving provocatively, the Russians were "even-handed in their approach, treated all parties with dignity and respect, and were firm in pursuit of their assigned mission."⁶⁸ General Nash further explained in an interview that Russian troops treated Serbs with the same distrust as the other military forces, as almost no one trusted any of the warring factions.⁶⁹ On the other hand, many US officers interviewed responded negatively when asked about the impartiality of the Russian peacekeepers. The presence of Russians, according to one Colonel who served in Bosnia as a troop commander, provided a safe haven for the violation of the Dayton Peace Accords by harboring Serb criminals.⁷⁰ However, the Balkan Task Force has seen no overt reporting of Russian partiality and maintains that it is often difficult to find reports that are completely truthful and reliable.⁷¹

There is also concern over the Russian procedures for performing inspections of weapons storage sites within its area of responsibility within US-led MND (N). In discussing US-Russian cooperation with US military officers who have participated in SFOR, many expressed their concern over the lack of inspections done by the Russian Brigade. Evidently, there was little value placed on this action by the Russian brigade. In fact, the US soldiers often performed the inspections within the Russian area of responsibility.⁷² However, one LNO pointed out that while some officers feel that Russians are not executing up to standard, they are executing to their own standard, which is no better or worse.⁷³

The overall level of professionalism of Russian members has also been questioned. A number of officers responded with instances of high levels of alcohol abuse by Russian soldiers and the creation of a brothel in the Russian area of responsibility.⁷⁴ However, as Colonel Kaufmann, commander of the Balkan Task Force, points out, while these types of instances are harmful to the overall peacekeeping mission of SFOR, they are not uncommon in any multinational operation, even with other NATO countries.⁷⁵

The Russians also reportedly had problems with their equipment and its maintenance. The US provided some of the necessary communication devices for the Russian Brigade since they did not own or operate any communications devices that were compatible with the US system. However, the US provided similar equipment to all of the participating forces operating in the US sector.⁷⁶ The Russian Brigade also suffered further problems with equipment, especially vehicles, which were old and unusable for operations because the Russians did not have the necessary maintenance upkeep.⁷⁷ This not only meant that the Russian Brigade would be slower to respond, but also that the US commander would often have to compensate in other ways. Problems with the poor quality and short range of the Russian radios caused difficulties in their ability to communicate and report quickly to MND (N). US forces are unable to pick up a phone or radio and speak with the person they are trying to contact from the Russian

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contingent. This causes a great deal of frustration for the US forces, who are used to instantaneous communication.

The language barrier was, and continues to be, one of the biggest problems between the Russian Brigade and US forces. Since communication is paramount to combined missions, the language barrier can have a large impact on the effectiveness of the combined force. Currently, US liaison officers receive approximately eighteen months of language training, but some are put into liaison positions before their training is complete.⁷⁸ Upon their arrival to SFOR, LNO's live and work with the Russian Brigade. However, for those who did not receive this amount of training, communicating and establishing rapport with the Russians is more difficult.

Overall, the working relationship in SFOR between the US command of the US-led MND (N) and the Russian Brigade has been cooperative and effective since it began in 1995. Although there are still issues of concern that cause friction between the two forces, they are not crucial to the overall effectiveness of the peacekeeping forces in Bosnia.

Lessons Learned in IFOR/SFOR

1. Russia and the US can work together under NATO and with the international community.

Having Russian forces under a US commander, five years after the Cold War ended, was an unexpected event. After their conducting the two major peace operation exercises and their experience in IFOR/SFOR, the two forces have learned more about each other's operating procedures. In the course of conducting operations, Russian and US troops expanded their military cooperation, including joint combined-arms training. They were able to develop unified procedures and standards, as well as increase tactical-level liaison, thus increasing both coordination and security.⁷⁹ Numerous mine locating and clearing activities were performed together, especially since there were an estimated 1000 mine fields located in the Russian sector alone.⁸⁰ Coordination also occurred in places where the warring parties might use toxic substances. Working contacts were set up between the Russian and American CBR (chemical-biological-radiological) defense services, including periodic environmental checks at the permanent base camps and smaller units. These examples demonstrate just a few of the many instances of successful coordination between the two forces.

2. Once there is a political will expressed and the US Secretary of Defense and Russian Minister of Defense sign the agreement that lays out the terms of the mission, the militaries must be able to execute plans as they see necessary.

Both US and Russian troops have been able to conduct a number of integrated operations to resolve military aspects not specifically addressed in the accords. A study conducted by the Foreign Military Studies Office, discussing the Russian and NATO forces in Bosnia, indicates that, "in the overall opinion of the operation participants, the partnership of NATO and Russia in Bosnia symbolized the

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obligation that the world community had taken itself to end the war there.⁸¹ Generals Joulwan and Shevtsov were able to overcome issues of command and the forces in Bosnia have been able to conduct a successful combined peacekeeping operation. The relationship between the two forces suffers greatly when forced apart by politics at higher levels.

3. A successful operation requires a common strategic objective and the professionalism of soldiers.

Despite different national interests and a competitiveness in pursuing those interests in the region, the mission of effective peacekeeping requires a high level of coordination and cooperation between the American and Russian forces. Regardless of the various cultural and military differences, the two groups were most often able to present and act as a unified force, showing the Bosnians that a soldier is a soldier, no matter what uniform he or she wears.

4. Russian and American soldiers are in agreement on a number of issues vital to the peacekeeping effort.

In a survey of US and Russian officers conducted by a joint US-Russian research team,⁸² there was a broad area of professional consensus among both populations. Both groups agreed that the success of multinational peace operations depends on how carefully such operations are prepared and emphasized the need for continued attention to operational planning, organizing supply and logistics, and maintaining coordination in order to secure success. Both groups of officers also supported, although to a differing degree, the need to improve coordination between commands and staffs and among the various national military contingents and with civilian agencies⁸³. Improved training and support for training for civil affairs to enhance cooperation was given a high priority.⁸⁴ The survey revealed that both groups oppose having the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) assume responsibility for conducting multinational peace operations and felt that multinational peace operations should not be entrusted to the military of a single nation, nor should the multinational staffing be extended down to brigade-battalion level.

These results highlight the fact that the two militaries agree on a number of important issues affecting their performance as peacekeeping forces. However, the areas of disagreement, especially those concerning strategic and operational command and control of multinational peacekeeping forces, illustrate the need to engage in US-Russian and NATO-Russian dialogue on the issue of future command arrangements for these operations. As this cooperation and teamwork becomes the norm in Bosnia, future operations will benefit from the lessons learned in IFOR and SFOR.

5. Developing and maintaining working relationships between US and Russian leaders, especially the SECDEF and MOD and other top military leaders, makes a significant difference in combined peacekeeping operations

The success of IFOR/SFOR is due in large part to the hard work and personal interest in building relationships between Secretary Perry, Minister Grachev, General Joulwan, General Shevtsov, and many others. Their ability to develop a partnership between the two militaries and work out issues of concern to both sides proved invaluable to the success of IFOR/SFOR. Had there not been such a desire to work together, Russia would not have participated and SFOR may not have achieved the same level of success it currently has.

Case Study of Abkhazia, Georgia (UNOMIG)

History of the Conflict

While the conflict in Abkhazia had been building since 1989, it began in earnest in early 1992, when the Abkhaz minority (17% of the population, about 93,000 people) began pressing for complete independence from Georgia after nationalist rhetoric from the Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia encouraged them to seek greater autonomy.⁸⁵ Georgian forces stormed the Abkhaz capital city, Sukhumi, in July 1992, claiming their purpose was to restore order.⁸⁶ Fighting then broke out between the two sides in August 1992. During that portion of the conflict, the Russian military aided the Abkhaz side by providing equipment and expertise, although it is unclear whether the military was acting independently or following orders from Moscow.⁸⁷ At that point the Georgian military was more of a renegade band of local clan leaders than a professional fighting force.⁸⁸ From August 1992 to October 1993 the Russian government brokered three cease-fire agreements, all of which were subsequently breached. The breaking of the third agreement highlights the convoluted involvement of Russian forces.

On 27 July 1993, the third agreement was reached which provided for disarmament, withdrawal of Georgian troops, and restoration of the legitimate government to Sukhumi but made no decision as to the political status of Abkhazia.⁸⁹ Neither the Georgians nor the Abkhaz disarmed, and Abkhazia attacked Sukhumi in September 1993, when Georgia was vulnerable because they were embroiled in a conflict in South Ossetia. At the same time, Russia was in the midst of a constitutional crisis and eventual coup, making it difficult for Russian troops to receive clear direction from Moscow. The Abkhaz offensive used military equipment the Russians had supposedly rendered useless.⁹⁰ The Russians gave at least tacit assent to the Abkhaz and are alleged to have provided aircraft and other heavy equipment for the offensive.⁹¹ During this offensive, the Abkhaz were able to take control of all of Abkhazia. Only at that point did the Russians threaten the Abkhaz with economic sanctions in order to broker a cease-fire. If Russia's government had not been in turmoil at the time, perhaps they would have acted more quickly and decisively, as Georgian President Shevardnadze claims, "If the events of the third and fourth of October [referring to the coup in Moscow] had happened earlier, then Sukhumi would not have fallen."⁹²

The fourth cease-fire agreement, reached in Moscow in 1994, has held to date. The situation remains volatile, with frequent clashes between paramilitary groups and acts of terrorism and sabotage

committed by criminal organizations and paramilitary groups. Most of these paramilitary groups are semi-organized Georgian freedom fighters trying to regain the territory claimed by the Abkhaz in the final conflict before the Moscow Agreement. No agreement has been reached on the political status of Abkhazia or the repatriation of the 300,000 Georgian refugees driven from the region during the conflict.⁹³ Since the cease-fire, Abkhazia has held "presidential elections" and established its own constitution, further exacerbating differences on its political status, and Georgian paramilitary groups heighten tensions through frequent disturbances in the security zone.⁹⁴ At present, attempts to achieve a political solution have produced only limited success.

The Peacekeeping Effort

The UN maintains 101 military observers in the UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). The UN's mandate is to "(a) monitor and verify the implementation by the parties of the Agreement on a Cease-fire and Separation of Forces signed in Moscow on 14 May 1994; (b) to observe the operation of the CIS peacekeeping force within the framework of the implementation of the Agreement; (c) to verify through observation and patrolling that troops of the parties did not remain in or re-enter the security zone and heavy military equipment did not remain or was not reintroduced in the security zone or restricted weapons zone;" and several other stipulations to ensure compliance with the agreement and the return of refugees.⁹⁵

Under the aegis of the CIS, Russia maintains about 1,500 forces in the region, although the authorization calls for the presence of 3,000 troops. The Russians have frequently called for the support of other CIS nations, but none have responded. At the CIS meeting in which the Moscow Agreement was concluded, the other CIS nations agreed to return to their respective governments and request troops for the operation. However, each government responded negatively to the request. This is due to the poor condition of many of the CIS countries' militaries and economies, their desire not to be involved with a Russian-dominated force at least perceived to be partial, and the tension between these governments and Russia. The Ukraine and several other CIS nations have only been willing to send observers to the UN observer mission, not troops to the CIS peacekeeping force.

According to UNOMIG official Wolfgang Weber, the UN mandate is sound and does not over-stretch UN capabilities as in some other peacekeeping missions. The Russian (CIS) forces maintain a stable environment for the political settlement to be worked out, or, at the very least, keep armed conflicts to a minimum. Weber says that the UN and Russian (CIS) forces work together successfully and the Russian troops are relatively well disciplined, equipped, and fed. However, the former Russian commander in Georgia, General Bobkin, claims that the force is not large enough or adequately equipped to take on a more ambitious mission of policing throughout Abkhazia and ensuring the safe return of refugees.⁹⁶ To perform that mission, he claims, would require eight to ten thousand troops.⁹⁷ Although

the effectiveness of Russian forces is in question, Weber believes that without continued Russian presence, or the presence of an equally capable UN force, fighting would resume almost immediately.

Performance of UN Troops and Interaction with CIS Forces

UN forces perform regular patrols, man checkpoints, conduct regular weapons inspections, and monitor the performance of Russian (CIS) forces. UN actions are limited by the size of the force and the security risks of being unarmed in an unstable environment. Weber believes that the fact that the UN troops are unarmed improves the impression of impartiality, though at times there have been security problems. One such problem in which seven UN members were taken hostage by a criminal group on 13 October 1999 caused the US to recall its military observers to Tbilisi, the Georgian capital,⁹⁸ where they remain to date in accordance with US policy. Because of this and other incidents, the UN attempted to introduce a UN protection force in 1998. However, Russia struck down the proposal at the UNSC, claiming that the Russian (CIS) forces were acting as a protection force for the UN and thus the introduction of 300 additional UN troops was unnecessary. Russia has been extremely suspicious of any attempts to get them out of Georgia, fearing NATO or US attempts to increase their influence in Russia's backyard. As an alternative to the UN Protection Force, the UN has augmented its staff with 17 international and 34 locally-hired security personnel. The lack of security for UN troops has forced them to close several team bases situated in isolated locations and has forced them to conduct only limited patrolling, leaving their mission only partially fulfilled. In particular, the US observers cannot perform their part in the mission adequately while being forced to remain in Tbilisi for security reasons.

The UN task of monitoring the Russian (CIS) peacekeepers has proved delicate because the Russian forces are also the only protection the UN members have from the warring factions. Regular UN-Russian troop exercises are conducted to maintain a high degree of readiness for security back up, and information of mutual interest is frequently exchanged.⁹⁹ The UN has actively encouraged Russia to perform more extensive mobile patrols and to be proactive in ensuring the dismantling of the military positions of both sides, which Russia has done to some degree. The UN would still like to see additional Russian and combined Russian-UN patrols, and has often coordinated with the Russians in performing minesweeping operations or in doing patrols in mine-laden areas. However, security concerns of both the UN, who does not want to be perceived as partial by doing patrols with the Russians, and Russia, often a target of partisan groups, have caused both forces to take more limited actions. Therefore, both are not completely fulfilling the mandate to secure the area, facilitate the return of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's), and ensure that no heavy weapons are brought into the restricted weapons zone.¹⁰⁰

UNOMIG has had only limited success in ensuring the implementation of the stipulations of the cease-fire agreement. The main obligations in the agreements on the separation of forces made in Tbilisi on 25 June 1999 have been fulfilled.¹⁰¹ The number of skirmishes on both sides of the cease-fire line has

also decreased.¹⁰² A system of joint investigations with the UN, Russia, and both parties to the conflict, has been set up to investigate violent incidents, with thirteen successful investigations already complete. However, a number of the key aspects of an eventual resolution have not been resolved. The return of refugees to Abkhazia, the political status of Abkhazia, and the establishment of a more secure environment will be necessary before a more permanent resolution can be achieved.

Performance of CIS Forces

The 1,500-man Russian (CIS) peacekeeping force has received recognition from a UN mandate for its role in maintaining security in the region in accordance with the 1994 Moscow Agreement. The UN mandate has provided some much-desired legitimacy for the Russians, although they have been unable to secure any UN funding for the operation. The US and other nations have been skeptical of providing any further legitimacy to the Russian force because of its alleged partiality and questionable performance.

Major Owen Cheney, US Army officer and UN Military Observer in Georgia, evaluates the Russian performance as a successful effort at completing the minimum task of keeping people from fighting.¹⁰³ They have performed reasonably well at maintaining security in an extremely volatile region. UN requests of Russia are generally followed, though they are usually limited only to what the UN knows Russia is willing to perform. Russia's first priority is force protection. Russian troops sometimes suffer equipment shortages or maintenance problems, several incidents due to Russian soldiers selling fuel on the black market, and have occasional discipline problems. Maintenance problems often result in valuable equipment eventually becoming unusable.

According to Weber, the primary drawback of the Russian (CIS) peacekeeping force is Russia's strong political interest in the region, thus making it difficult, if not impossible, for them to be neutral. Russian forces are perceived as too dominating and party to the conflict, often making them a target for both sides at various times during the fighting. This limits the Russian forces' ability to perform routine patrols for fear of the safety of their troops. At present, they are only able to man checkpoints and maintain large clusters of forces to provide a separation between the two sides. According to Cheney,

The CIS (Russian) Peacekeeping Force (PKF) continues to be unable or unwilling to fulfill its mandated tasks. In particular, Russian inactivity in patrolling and delays in expanding its AOR [Area of Responsibility] to include both the security zone (SZ) and restricted weapons zone (RWZ) have failed to create security conditions conducive to the return of internally displaced persons (IDP's) to their pre-war homes. The CIS PKF appears content to maintain the pre-May [1998] fighting status quo in the SZ and conduct operations to support only those CIS mandated tasks which minimize the threat to their own forces in the conflict zone. After the recent fighting in May, the Russian PKF appears to be taking a more active role in Gali with increased patrolling and establishment of new checkpoints. However, these actions are more likely linked to the PKF command's desire to minimize casualties than to fulfill its mandated tasks.¹⁰⁴

The Russian peacekeeping forces on the ground argue that they need a more robust force to completely fulfill these mandates, but such a force remains unlikely in the foreseeable future.

In addition to its inability to fulfill its mandate, Russia has frequently come into question for its partiality to the Abkhaz. According to Etery Astemirova, Chairwoman of the Human Rights Commission of the Abkhazian Autonomous Republic, there are specific accounts of “peacekeepers detaining citizens and handing them over to Abkhaz authorities who then jailed, beat, and tortured them; threatening and robbing citizens at gunpoint, sometimes claiming to be collecting ‘pay’ for protecting Georgian interests; providing cover for Abkhaz paramilitaries conducting punitive combat operations; and even killing individual citizens.”¹⁰⁵ Though these allegations are disturbing, Weber believes that in recent times the impression of the Russians as partisan has slightly decreased and their leadership is better at ensuring disciplined and professional performance.¹⁰⁶

Russian involvement provides a more secure environment and maintains the status quo but does little to provide for a more lasting peace. The military forces are inadequate for a more ambitious mission, and the political will, both in Russia and internationally, has not been sufficiently committed to resolving the conflict. The Abkhaz, bolstered by the Russian presence, have little incentive to negotiate a solution. The Russians have no desire to leave and thus lose their influence in the region. Until a concerted political effort is made to find a solution, the status quo will remain indefinitely, with its high costs to Georgia, Russia, and the UN.

Lessons Learned in Abkhazia

1. The US should expect Russian involvement in operations in Russia's near abroad.

The Russians will be heavily engaged in the near abroad, promoting their interests and often times acting as an impartial force or a domineering parent controlling its children. Russia spends over \$526,000 per month maintaining forces in Abkhazia, placing a difficult burden on the Ministry of Defense.¹⁰⁷ Despite this high economic cost and the political pressure from Georgia for the Russians to leave, Russia has continued and will continue to maintain its presence in keeping with its interests. Any solution to the situation in Georgia or elsewhere in the near abroad must therefore include Russian participation.

2. Russia's forces are adequate for maintaining peace and stability, but greater political effort is required to broker a more comprehensive peace settlement.

The Russian forces in Abkhazia prevent a re-escalation of the conflict, but many observers claim that until Russian forces leave, Abkhazia has no incentive to reach an agreement on either its status within the sovereignty of Georgia or the return of refugees, thus preventing a resolution. The problems of Russian partiality and heavy-handedness encourage the continuation of the status quo. Russian troops can

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maintain peace because of superior force and the threat of even greater force, but if a resolution is not in Russian interests, it will not happen.

3. Russian (CIS) and UN forces need to improve their cooperation and coordination.

The situation in Abkhazia is extremely unstable and any small conflict has the potential to incite a larger conflict. The UN and Russia must coordinate to make sure all required areas are watched and adequate patrols are performed so that they do not miss a build-up of troops or minor altercation that may lead to a larger conflict. The UN cannot perform all these missions without Russian protection, and Russian forces are unlikely to perform many of them on their own. In addition, many of the missions that might facilitate a political solution, such as the return of the IDP's, can only be performed through joint efforts. One positive example of this is the UN's recent success in setting up a joint investigating team with Russia and the warring parties to investigate terrorist or criminal incidents in the region. However, only a small number of incidents have been investigated. The Coordination Council, a forum for the four parties to discuss implementation of the agreement, has had minimal success and has often stalled in the negotiation process. The UN and Russia do little to coordinate activities except when the UN requires protection to accomplish an activity.

4. Any apparent pressure to replace the Russian mission with UN or other international troops will be met with fierce Russian resistance.

Russia believes that the CIS peacekeeping force is a legitimate force that should receive full UN recognition and funds. UN protection forces will continue to be vetoed in the UNSC. While Russia theoretically approves of using the UN and OSCE as peacekeeping bodies, they have resisted most efforts to use them in the near abroad. Anything that they perceive as Western encroachment into their sphere of influence will meet with strong resistance.

THE FUTURE OF RUSSIAN PEACEKEEPING

After looking at Russia's interests, political environment, peacekeeping forces and doctrine, and case studies from combined operations in Bosnia and CIS operations in Abkhazia, it is possible to draw several conclusions about where and how Russia is likely to involve itself in future peacekeeping operations. According to Russian President Putin, territorial integrity and domestic order are his top priorities.¹⁰⁸ Conflicts on Russia's borders, most likely to occur in the near abroad, will take precedence among Russia's peacekeeping missions because of the potential they have for destabilizing areas within Russian territory and because of Russia's desire to maintain its sphere of influence in the near abroad. Outside this region, however, Russian peacekeeping will not take a high priority for the next several years. Russia still fears a weakening of its influence in the world, and thus will remain engaged with NATO in the Balkans and, to a certain extent, with UN missions, but their resources will be much more limited for such endeavors.

In the near abroad, Russia will prefer to work under the aegis of the CIS, while striving to receive a UN mandate and funding for their operations. They will most likely be unwilling to sacrifice control of the operation for a full UN mandate and funding,¹⁰⁹ but will continue to request funds and troops from other CIS nations. Despite the high costs of involvement, Russia will continue to get involved in conflicts in the near abroad to protect their interests and maintain their influence in the region. At the same time, they will seek to keep the US and especially NATO out of their sphere of influence.

Russia will maintain its commitment to the Balkans out of pride and a desire to protect their interests in the area. Russia desires to remain an important player in the world arena. However, the military may seek to reduce the level of commitment because of financial constraints and the high level of operations they have had to sustain. As Putin announced, they will continue to work with NATO,¹¹⁰ desiring a more equal voice in the operation. Despite this desire, the military is unlikely to devote many of its scarce resources to conforming its equipment and procedures to NATO standards of operation. They will continue to put pressure on the US and other NATO countries to work through the OSCE and the UN as a conflict resolution body, rather than performing operations outside the purview of the UN.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With the future of Russian peacekeeping in mind, this section recommends actions to be taken to improve combined operations in Bosnia and to support Russian operations in Abkhazia, with consideration given to those actions most likely to improve the US-Russian strategic relationship. The final portion of this section looks at the more robust options that are effective in both spheres and can be used in future operations to build and maintain a cooperative relationship.

Recommendations for Bosnia and Combined Operations

Most of the problems in US-Russian relations in combined operations stem from a lack of understanding or communication between the two militaries. This gap exists on every level of the relationship, from the highest levels of the US Department of Defense (DoD) and the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) to interactions between individual soldiers. Therefore, the following recommendations have been divided at various levels to address such issues.

Operational Level Recommendations

Problem: Misunderstandings of military-political tasks between the RUSBDE and MND(N) headquarters causing difficulties in their ability to respond to tactical orders.¹¹¹ US commanders are used to sending verbal orders. However, the Russians would prefer to have all tasks published in Implementing Instructions (IMPIN's) before they act. In addition, the Russians interpret some tasks as political-military tasks, not solely military tasks. Therefore, they must get permission through the Russian chain of command, which is time consuming.¹¹²

Recommendation A: Increase the number of LNO's (liaison officers) to the Russian Brigade to five or six, three or four with the RUSBDE and two in Tuzla. Currently, there are three LNO's stationed with the Russian Brigade at the Russian Headquarters in Ugljevik and one working at the U.S. division Headquarters in Tuzla. Their job is to maintain connectivity between the RUSBDE and MND (N) HQ by serving as translator and interpreter between the two headquarters. Additional LNO's would be tasked with jobs similar to those of the present LNO's.

Analysis: The addition of more LNO's would enable them to be more effective and decrease their workload. LNO's are indispensable to the operation for translating and offering professional opinions to the RUSBDE. Civilian translators are not able to translate the military concepts and do not have the same level of experience as LNO's. Russians require that tasks are published in Implementing Instructions (IMPIN's) before they act; however, American forces will execute missions based simply on phone conversations. In addition, reporting standards differ since US doctrine calls for a closer battle tracking system, which means a higher volume and detail of reporting.¹¹³ These differences in policy mean that the LNO's must constantly spend a great deal of time working tasking and reporting issues. Increasing

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the number of LNO's to the Russians would spread out the workload and lessen the time each LNO works on reporting and tasking issues and would allow them to spend more time developing personal rapport with the Russian officers. This personal rapport established by the LNO's is vital to the overall peacekeeping mission.

Recommendation B: Include a Russian Representative in Partnership for Peace command post exercises. During these command post exercises, efforts should focus on issues of coordinating staff organizations and developing practical recommendations on the use of military force and on the basic premises for assessing the effectiveness of its use. A mobile staff made up of US and Russian officers should be created from these exercises to work issues in case of necessary emergency deployments to conflict regions.

Analysis: The inclusion of Russian officers in the planning can hedge against the possibility that misunderstandings, coupled with different national interests, will grow into serious political dilemmas. Russian officers can provide experience from their peacekeeping operations (with the CIS, NATO, or the UN) that may be helpful in dealing with combined peacekeeping operations. Furthermore, they will be able to troubleshoot possible operational problems concerning Russian units in combined operations, such as the difficulty of understanding "implied tasks" assigned by MND (N). For future operations, having a Russian in the command post exercises can improve overall peacekeeping effectiveness as Russian relations with certain countries may provide important information concerning future possible conflicts.

On the other hand, Russia may not be interested in participating in any Pfp exercise as it lends to the perception that they accept NATO's actions. Including Russian officers in such exercises is difficult when their participation is uncertain. However, their participation should be sought after because of its potential benefits for the operation.

Other Options: *Include Russian General Staff as members in the planning structures of NATO at all stages of preparation and in direct planning of peace operations in potential future areas.* This is highly unlikely since NATO members do not want high levels of Russian inclusion in policy planning, and it would only create more difficulty in reaching a consensus in the planning of operations.

Tactical Level Recommendations

Problem: Lack of professionalism and partiality shown on the part of the Russian soldiers, as well as differences in military culture and a lack of coordination.

Recommendation C: Restart combined patrolling missions with US and Russian forces.

Continual reevaluation of NATO and other participating countries' actions towards the former warring parties shows that it was not always completely balanced.¹¹⁴ Currently, the US and Russian forces do not perform any combined patrolling missions due to the political fallout during the summer of 1999.¹¹⁵ Before this, the Russians and Americans did approximately six combined patrols per month,

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three in the American sector, and three in the Russian area of responsibility with one LNO present with the patrol to facilitate the mission and communication.

Analysis: These combined patrols help the relationship in two ways: they serve as a way to present a unified front to the people in Bosnia who were hoping to drive a wedge between the two forces, and they allow the soldiers to learn more about each other. One LNO called the combined patrols the biggest “money-maker for US-Russian military relations.”¹¹⁶ In addition, the Russian military constantly looks for ways to prove its ability as a great military force. These patrols are a means to allow the Russian military to demonstrate their capabilities. Increasing the number of patrols is inexpensive since the resources needed are already available (equipment, radios, etc.) Because one of the biggest concerns of the US in working with the Russians is their lack of professionalism, combined operations at this level provide the US military with a way to influence the Russian military.

Despite these potential benefits, issues of trust and problems of language and differences in doctrine continue to haunt combined patrols. There is a fear on the part of US officers that, due to the perception of Russian partiality by the Bosnian people, any combined patrol might affect the reputation of US troops and therefore affect the overall mission accomplishment.

Recommendation D: Set aside more time to brief incoming American commanders (down through platoon leaders and NCO's) on various differences in military culture, terminology, procedures, etc. This can be done by the Foreign Area Officers (FAO's) in the area that have served with the RUSBDE, assuming that there are adequate numbers of LNO's available (see recommendation A).

Analysis: For effective combined planning and deployment, understanding each nation's military culture is important at all levels. While liaison officers are helpful, they cannot replace commander or staff level communication. Discussion of possible miscommunication problems in the training phase will lessen the impact of harmful rumors on both sides. It is often very time consuming to learn the cultures of all participating nations in combined peacekeeping operations when time in training is already tight. Addressing issues of culture will not solve larger problems of interoperability and differences in doctrine. However, some LNO's have commented that these differences of culture and operation are not as significant as earlier expected.¹¹⁷ The success of this recommendation depends heavily on the number and time availability of the LNO's.

Other Options: *Introducing clear legal guarantees to be implemented in the peacekeeping force mandate thus, preventing conflicting interpretations and the possibility of favoring one side over another.* Developing legal standards would be difficult because each peacekeeping force has its own rules of engagement, and each country has the right to follow its national standards given that they are within the rules of engagement.

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Problem: Language barriers effect all levels of operations. Typically only the LNO's speak any amount of Russian, and few Russians speak English. This problem has been recognized as one of the biggest issues that continues to cause difficulties in combined operations.

Recommendation E: DoD should ensure that liaison officers receive adequate training in the necessary language. Also, DoD should develop phrase books that provide essential information on carrying out common or shared tasks in both Russian and English.

Analysis: Language training will greatly reduce many of the other issues of concern. Improving communication between the two militaries can make tasks such as combined patrolling easier. It can also increase the amount of communication that takes place between the RUSBDE and MND (N) command. By developing and providing troops with phrase books of relevant translations, the militaries will increase their ability to communicate with each other. When troops are able to speak to each other, it helps them develop trust and build relationships, especially on a commander's level.

Increasing the ability of LNO's to speak the Russian language would help to reduce past problems of misunderstanding. Captain Leyde, a current LNO in SFOR commented that "a LNO who arrives with a high proficiency in Russian has a much easier time establishing rapport and proving their professional competency."¹¹⁸ He also mentioned that many of the FAO's that arrive in Bosnia receive no graduate-level political-military classes and little additional language training after attending DLI (Defense Language Institute) and a three- to six-month stay at the Marshall Center in Garmish, Germany. Extensive language training requires time and resources that are limited for the DoD. However, ensuring that LNO's are properly prepared once they arrive in Bosnia is vital for their success.

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Recommendations for US Support for Peacekeeping in Abkhazia and the Near Abroad

With US interests in mind, this section looks at how the US can improve the US-Russian strategic relationship through supporting Russia in performing its peacekeeping functions in the near abroad. The analysis lists several of the problems in Abkhazia and gives recommendations for solving or improving them that provide the best combination of positive impact on the situation and on the US-Russian relationship.

Problem: The UN Observers are not able to completely fulfill their mandate.

The UN observers, because they are unarmed, have become targets of criminal groups and partisan forces. The limitations on UN observers allow for a more unstable environment because the observers cannot ensure the guidelines for restricted weapons' zones are completely followed or that there is not a build-up of troops preparing for an attack in certain areas of the security zone.

Recommendation F: Allow US UNOMIG observers more freedom to travel to certain areas within the conflict regions and increase the number of US observers from two to five.

The US troops can only perform their mission if they are able to more directly view the conflict zone. The UN observers have taken adequate precautions to protect their troops while still performing the mission. US troops should not show a lack of commitment to the region by being unwilling to perform the tasks that the rest of the observers perform. While the DOD may deem it necessary to restrict them from isolated regions because of security concerns, they should at least be allowed to visit Sukhumi, where Russian (CIS) and UN headquarters are located, as well as the more protected areas around Zugdidi and Gali.

Analysis: Many in the UN and Russia see a lack of US commitment because of their unwillingness to bear the same risks as the other UN observers. Lifting the restriction and increasing the number of observers will show more support for the UN mission and will enable the US observers to better monitor the belligerents' compliance with the mandate and the performance of Russian (CIS) forces. By remaining in Tbilisi, US observers give the Abkhaz the impression that the US is partial to the Georgians, decreasing Abkhaz trust in US efforts to resolve the crisis. Increasing the number of observers and allowing them to interact with the Russian (CIS) forces will improve the familiarity with and understanding of the Russian military. If the US is unwilling to allow its observers to actually observe the conflict, their presence hurts UN and Russian perceptions of US troops because it highlights the fact that US presence is more for political purposes than an actual sign of commitment.

The DOD must necessarily be concerned with the security risks to their personnel. Another hostage crisis, if it involved an American, could be much more serious than the previous incident where seven UN observers were taken hostage by a criminal group and later released unharmed.¹¹⁹ None of the

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UN observers have been seriously harmed to date, and the UN has taken precautions to improve security by limiting patrols and not manning checkpoints in isolated locations. The increased security provided by the fifty-one armed guards should be enough to convince the DOD to loosen the restrictions on its observers.

Recommendation G: Increase the amount of international and locally hired-armed guards.

Because the attempt to introduce a UN protection force was refused by Russia, the UN mission hired seventeen international and thirty-four local armed guards. The UN should be extremely careful in its selection of armed guards, making sure that they are reliable and are not likely to turn on the UN observers during a conflict. The original plan to hire different groups of armed guards should be expanded to hire different armed guards based on the sector in which the UN troops are operating. In certain areas, Russian (CIS) troops can protect UN forces, in other sectors the local population can be relied on, while in certain areas the UN should rely on internationally-hired guards.

Analysis: Contracting armed guards is cheaper than a UN protection force and does little to harm the US-Russian relationship. UN observers would then be able to expand their patrols and maintain more team bases with less fear of criminal groups or partisans. They would thus be able to fulfill more of their mandate and provide more stability in the region. The armed guards will require a commitment of funds (around \$1M/year) from the UN, but without the added security, UN observers will continue to be unable to fulfill their mandate.

While the plan may not harm US-Russian relations, it does not necessarily improve them either. The US would have to request additional funds for the UN to contract out these additional armed guards, possibly creating again the tension with the Russian forces who claim that they are enough protection for UN troops. However, by using Russian troops in certain areas, this will increase their trust and increase US observers' cooperation with Russian troops.

Other Options: Re-introduce the idea of a UN protection force. This option is likely to be rejected by the Russians and will only create increased tension in the US-Russian relationship.

Problem: The Russian (CIS) Forces are not able to completely fulfill their mandate and sometimes act (or are perceived to act) with partiality to the Abkhaz.

The Russian forces are primarily concerned with force protection because of the hostility directed at their forces due to their perceived partiality. This has hurt their ability to oversee the return of IDP's and provide more extensive policing in the AOR to ensure stability. Russian troops claim that they would need more troops to adequately fulfill their mandate.

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Recommendation H: Increase US UNOMIG observers' interactions with CIS peacekeeping forces.

The US observers should increase the amount of time spent with Russian forces to improve the relationship and assess what areas the UN and/or US might be able to provide help either through education and training in necessary subjects, encouragement to undertake certain activities, or logistical support for operations. In the future, the US may be able to use that knowledge in offering education and training in facilitating the return of IDP's and policing the conflict zone, though the US has its own difficulties with this. In addition, by understanding the weaknesses of the Russian peacekeepers, US observers may be able to interact with the Russians to develop solutions for fulfilling the mandate and moving towards a resolution of the conflict.

Analysis: By frequently interacting with the Russians and discussing common problems in fulfilling the mandate, US observers have an opportunity to improve the US-Russian relationship. While the mission of the UN observers is to monitor Russian performance, one of the goals of that observation is to help Russian (CIS) forces perform their mission more successfully. With an increased number of US observers in UNOMIG, some of these observers should focus on providing advice and assistance for Russian (CIS) forces. This then offers the opportunity for the US to give Russia more much-desired credit when it successfully modifies its activities to improve its peacekeeping.

The Russians will most likely greet increased interactions with US observers with skepticism of US motives. They would react negatively to a patronizing attitude that accuses them of not knowing how to perform peacekeeping correctly or to perceived efforts to "spy" on their activities. The relationship must thus be built slowly and with clear objectives for resolving some of the common problems in the operation, such as security concerns and the return of IDP's. The US, too, will have reservations in developing this relationship. Offering support and credit to the Russian forces is a worthy goal, but the US will want to be careful not to encourage or support the wrong kind of actions.

Recommendation I: Encourage and support other CIS nations, such as the Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Georgia, to take a more active role in CIS peacekeeping missions.

Both politically and militarily, the US can support these nations in an effort to make the CIS an organization less dominated by Russia and more capable in its peacekeeping efforts. The US should give political encouragement for these nations to provide troops for the operations. In addition, the DOD can provide increased funding through the Enhanced International Peacekeeping Capabilities (EIPC) initiative to improve facilities, equipment, and training for CIS countries, including Russia. In 1999, the US spent \$1M through EIPC on the Ukraine's peacekeeping capabilities. This funding could also be given to Russia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Georgia, and a number of other countries. Outside of EIPC, the US can also support countries like the Ukraine and Azerbaijan with funds for participation in peacekeeping activities in the near abroad. This would cost in the range of \$3M-\$5M per year for each country.

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Analysis: Because most operations in the near abroad will probably take place under the CIS aegis for quite some time, the US should take some reasonable steps to strengthen and improve its peacekeeping potential. EIPC's mission is to "increase and improve the pool of capable peacekeepers,"¹²⁰ which this would accomplish. Increasing the participation of countries that are attempting to develop militaries with NATO-like standards will improve the impartiality and capabilities of forces engaged in peacekeeping in the near abroad. In addition, encouraging other nations' involvement will advance regional defense cooperation and transparency because these nations will make more of an effort to show that they are a legitimate force and not simply controlled by Russia. Russia will be less dominant as more nations take an active role, but it will also be required to fund smaller portions of operations. Using EIPC with Russia will improve US-Russian cooperation and provide them with some much-needed funds.

The US will have to address certain concerns before supporting CIS activities. It is opposed to an organization dominated by Russia, and would like to see other nations have a more equitable voice. This can only be achieved by US encouragement for them to increase participation. It may be hard to justify giving EIPC funds to Russia when other countries are considered more deserving of such funds. However, it is important to take into account how many peacekeeping efforts Russia is involved in and thus how beneficial the funds could be if they even slightly improved Russia's peacekeeping performance. The near abroad is one of the more unstable regions in the world, and thus support for peacekeeping in that region is important.

Other Options: 1) *Increase Joint UN-CIS operations.* While this option would be beneficial to the operation, it does little to improve the US-Russian strategic relationship and thus should be given less emphasis than the increased contact between US observers and CIS forces.

2) *Provide additional funds to Russia's peacekeeping mission as support for greater Russian efforts to facilitate the return of IDP's.* This option may be considered after the US observers establish some successful initiatives with the Russian (CIS) forces. However, it will be extremely difficult to establish enough political support for financing Russian peacekeeping.

Problem: The political situation is at a stalemate, with little sign of improvement.

The two primary issues concerning the political status of Abkhazia and the return of IDP's remain unresolved. The Abkhaz are unwilling to allow the return of IDP's without first coming to agreement on their political status. While they have agreed to remain an autonomous republic, the two parties have not agreed to the details of the arrangement. The Georgians have been unwilling to resettle any of the IDP's, even though it is unrealistic to expect that the Abkhaz will ever allow all of them to return because it would leave the Abkhaz as a minority on their own territory. In this case, the recommendation depends upon the status of the peace process and the emphasis the US puts on its interests in the near abroad.

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Option A: Leave the status quo, allowing Abkhazia and Georgia to come to an agreement and supporting them in the process.

Analysis: In the current situation, there is only limited fighting between the two sides. Any action the US takes risks upsetting the current peace. Therefore, it should not get involved in what may turn into another peacekeeping debacle. Any action that leads to greater US participation will irritate the Russians, potentially harming the US-Russian relationship. It is not clear that US interests are significant enough to commit to resolving the situation.

While maintaining the status quo follows the “do no harm” principle in our relationship with Russia, it leaves the Georgian situation at a stalemate with the possibility to re-ignite a conflict with Russian troops caught in the fighting. There is little reason to believe that Georgia and Abkhazia are tired of fighting or that they are any closer to reaching a solution than when they originally signed the Moscow Agreement in 1994. While no action should be taken that is not carefully thought out both for its short- and long-term consequences in the region and in the US-Russian relationship, Option B provides the recommended method for attempting a resolution should there be a greater US political commitment to resolving it.

Option B: Press Georgia and Abkhazia to come to a political solution with the promise that an international force, composed of a conglomeration of CIS forces and other neighboring countries, will help implement the agreement.

A successful resolution to the conflict that involves both the US and Russia could have benefits for the US-Russian relationship. Such a solution could pave the way for similar cooperation in peacekeeping conflicts throughout the near abroad. However, the US should not expect a simple or quick solution, as very few peacekeeping efforts have provided easy solutions. Knowing the commitment it would take, this option should not be undertaken currently given the low level of US interest in the region.

With enough political pressure by the Group of Friends of Georgia (US, UK, France, Germany, Russia, and, temporarily, the Ukraine), Abkhazia and Georgia may be forced to come to an agreement. The Group of Friends should present a detailed plan for ensuring Abkhaz autonomy, returning the refugees, and maintaining the stability in the region. This plan should include the commitment of several nations to provide troops- Russia maintaining its current presence, the Ukraine adding an equivalent amount, with Azerbaijan and Greece, who have expressed possible willingness to commit troops, and any other willing countries in the region making up the rest of the forces. The plan will cover how they will police the security zone and the rest of Abkhazia until an internal police force can be developed. While the force would receive a UN mandate once the parties agreed to the solution, it will not be a UN force.

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Russia would probably not agree to leave the region, and a UN force cannot include Russia, because of the UN policy to discourage the participation of neighboring countries with interests in the region.

Analysis: The promise of a more international force will encourage Georgia to press hard for a solution because it has frequently called for such a force to be introduced. Russia would be unable to afford the increase in troops, a force on the order of 10,000 troops, which is required for an agreement on the political status of Abkhazia and the return of IDP's to be implemented. This plan thus gives them the incentive of support of other forces to help relieve the financial strain that increasing their troop commitment would cause. With Russia supporting such an operation, they can pressure the Abkhaz to come to an agreement. The peacekeeping force would then be able to police and help pacify the area, ensuring the safe return of refugees and the restoration of normal economic and political conditions.

This plan would likely take some time to put into effect. The biggest obstacles will be to convince Russia of the plan, to achieve an agreement even with Russian pressure on the Abkhaz, and to receive approval to give US funds to the Ukraine and Azerbaijan as members of a CIS force. Russia would be skeptical of proposals for additional troops until a political solution is reached. However, if it could be convinced that these troops would be under the CIS aegis with a UN mandate, it might be willing to pressure Abkhazia into coming to an agreement. Once a political agreement is achieved, the will of the Group of Friends would be sufficiently behind the introduction of a larger peacekeeping force. The plan would require the US to put its political will behind achieving a solution, but it would require neither troops nor an expense as large as a UN operation would incur. The US would have to offer to provide some support for the Ukrainian and Azeris for their willingness to commit such a large force to the region, probably around \$10 million per country, but that would be the largest expense.

OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall Recommendations to Improve US-Russian Relations through Peacekeeping

Recommendation 1: Define the circle of participants in the operational planning of multinational peacekeeping operations by the level or amount of their participation. While the involvement of non-NATO countries in the policy planning stages of an operation would only add additional congestion and cause the policy planning to be more difficult than it currently is, NATO should look to include all participants in the operational planning of missions. Although the inclusion of Russia in the planning of combined peacekeeping operations like IFOR and KFOR involves changing NATO policy and not solely US policy, it would be beneficial for the US to ask for the inclusion of Russia in the operational planning.

Analysis: In the planning for IFOR and KFOR, there was a lack of coordination with and involvement of Russia on a political level in the operational planning of joint peacekeeping missions. This lack of coordination and planning for IFOR was one of the top concerns expressed by the Russian military once they were established in Bosnia.¹²¹ In the future, greater Russian participation in the planning of operations can reduce their overall concern in becoming a part of a multinational peacekeeping force. The inclusion of Russia and effective Russian participation is an important aspect of peacekeeping operations in the Balkans. By making the “planning circle” larger, Russia and other participating countries can have a say in operations in which they will be participating. This allows contributing countries to express and work through areas of concern before the commencement of the military mission. In addition, working together to plan the operation facilitates the development of relationships at a higher level of political and military structure. These relationships have been shown to be some of the most important aspects in the success of IFOR/SFOR implementation.

The planning structure will depend greatly on how the multinational force is structured. If it is a NATO force, the NATO allies will be hesitant to include Russia in operational planning because of concerns about sharing intelligence.¹²² Including non-NATO countries in combined peacekeeping efforts is an ad hoc process that requires extensive planning and coordination each time it occurs. Although the inclusion of Russia in IFOR was difficult, it was not nearly as complicated as the more formal Helsinki Agreement reached in the summer of 1999 before the introduction of Russian forces as part of KFOR. Formal political agreements require a considerable amount of political and military effort to find solutions to both Russian and American concerns. In addition, certain members of NATO and many in the US do not want too much Russian involvement and do not want to provide Russia with any form of veto power in the planning of operations. There is already an opportunity for Russia to voice its opinions of any NATO operations through EAPC (Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council), which they currently do not participate in, and through the Permanent Joint Council. NATO is obligated to respond to such concerns and either justify the action or make a change in the planning. However, because of Russia’s large

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contribution to the peacekeeping effort, they should be given more opportunity to provide input than simply reviewing the final operational plan and commenting on it. Non-NATO participants who make significant contributions to the peacekeeping effort and whose forces will be used in the operation should be given a larger voice in the operational planning.

Recommendation 2: Restart educational exchanges between US and Russian military personnel.

Educational exchange programs and funding are already established for Russian officers to the US in the IMET (International Military Education and Training) Program. The current funding for Russia in FY00 is \$900,000, which includes the tuition costs, travel expenses, supplemental living allowances, and medical expenses of students.¹²³ However, Russia suspended its participation in the IMET FY99 program after political fallout in the summer of 1999. Russia should be reestablished in the following courses: Civil-Military Strategy for International Development (2 persons), Language Instructor (6 persons), Executive Program in Civilian Military Relations (3 persons), and Legal Considerations in Military and Peace Operations (4 persons).¹²⁴ In addition to Russian participation in American courses, US Army officers should be sent to the Vystrel Academy in Russia. Vystrel Academy has made offers to accept international students, but the US has not sent its officers to the program for several years.

Analysis: The language gap and differences in military operations continue to be a divider between American and Russian forces. Having Russian officers in the US military educational systems will give the Russian military a better understanding of US doctrine and may influence Russian operations and professionalism. Furthermore, this education promotes increased English language training and a more common understanding of peacekeeping. As for American officers, the Vystrel Academy is well-known for being an exceptional school for learning UN peacekeeping procedures.¹²⁵ Just as Russian officers would benefit from learning American standards, US members would receive first-hand training on Russian peacekeeping doctrine that helps to bridge the culture gap. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has stated that educational exchanges with Russia remain a high priority.¹²⁶

However, incorporating Russia back into the educational system may be difficult since Russia terminated its participation in the IMET program due to political differences. In addition, providing extensive military education for Russian military members may be a hard sell politically. Nonetheless, the program is already established and can continue once Russia agrees to participate.

Recommendation 3: Perform combined exercises for staff level officers under the established Pfp program. Exercises should include the active participation of Russian staff level officers in the planning and implementation of peace operations similar to RUKUS-98 in St. Petersburg in FY98.

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Analysis: Combined exercises in the early 90's are credited for making the inclusion of Russia into IFOR possible. A large part of the effective cooperation between the Russian and US militaries in IFOR came from their ability to exercise together before the actual mission. Through these staff level exercises, the US and Russia can work on a number of the difficult issues that can presently be seen in SFOR and KFOR. Combined exercises can influence Russian forces in their peacekeeping procedures and help US forces understand Russian procedures.

With its current weak economy, the Russian military is barely able to support itself in its present commitments. Moreover, since exercises require troops and additional resources, Russia feels that it is already doing all the "exercising" it needs through its participation in SFOR and KFOR. Therefore, the cost of these exercises rests on the shoulders of the US. Although current legislation prohibits the use of CTR (Combined Threat Reduction) funds for peacekeeping or peace-related activities with Russia,¹²⁷ funding for PfP exercises already exists and is available for these exercises. However, even with US funding, Russia may still not agree to participate in these exercises. Russia is not interested in adopting NATO operational tactics as they feel this would show their support for NATO, which they believe is not the proper organization to carry out peacekeeping operations.

Recommendation 4: Improve Russian language and cultural expertise among US foreign area officers. Working together in peacekeeping and on other transnational issues requires an ability to communicate and understand one another. The military should allow FAO's to receive language training earlier. FAO's are often not given language training and designated as FAO's until their 6th or 7th year of service, when they are already almost 30 years old. To become truly fluent in their language of expertise, they should be given language training earlier in their careers. In addition, the military should ensure that FAO's are not put in liaison positions before they have received adequate training. According to Captain Leyde, those US officers who have not received enough training and are not proficient in the Russian language have a difficult time establishing a good rapport with the Russian military.¹²⁸

Analysis: The military would clearly benefit from providing earlier language training to FAO's. They would have a better grasp of the language because they started at an earlier age, making them more effective in their interactions with their Russian counterparts. In addition, ensuring that FAO's only receive foreign assignments after they have received adequate training will increase their credibility among Russian officers. Putting officers in foreign assignments when they have not received adequate training in that language allows for miscommunications and misunderstandings between the two countries. Liaison assignments are the first point of contact between the US and Russian militaries and thus should be given a high priority so that the Russian commander and Russian troops develop a favorable impression of the US military.

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The military must make a trade-off between the skill level of FAO's and training efficacy. The army currently spends three to four years training FAO's, a considerable amount of time assuming a 20-year career.¹²⁹ The military wants to ensure that those officers who become FAO's have the desire and the potential to reach the rank of Lieutenant Colonel or higher so that they remain in the service long enough to make the cost of the training worthwhile. It would cost much more to provide language training earlier if it meant that the military had to train more FAO's because there was a higher chance that they would leave the service earlier. The military should seek a compromise where they provide some language training earlier and then complete the training after the officer demonstrates potential both in the language and as a high-quality officer. The cost and time required to train these officers is worth the benefits of the improved communication and understanding between the two nations.

Recommendation 5: Increase cultural training for officers and NCO's assigned to work with Russian units. US officers sent to the Balkans receive training in understanding the Bosnians, Serbs, and Croats, but not necessarily their fellow Russian peacekeepers. US officers and NCO's sent to work with Russian units should be taught the cultural differences as well as the differences in the way Russian military units operate. This does not have to be an extensive training program, but could be done by Russian FAOs in a day's training during mission preparation for a mission in Bosnia, Kosovo, or in any future US-Russian combined operations.

Analysis: Understanding some of the cultural differences will decrease the tension and hostility that is often created by different cultural norms. US officers and NCO's will know what to expect and how to respond when interacting with their Russian counterparts. While this training will take time out of an already tightly-packed and vital train-up time, the cost is minimal, and it is worth making time for because of its importance for both mission accomplishment and improving the US-Russian relationship.

Recommendation 6: Give more credit to Russia for its peacekeeping operations in recognition of improved performance in desired areas. When Russia successfully undertakes an activity with the encouragement or approval of the US, the US should give them credit in the international arena for their actions. The Russian forces have performed reasonably well in areas such as Moldova and South Ossetia, and they should be given credit for it.¹³⁰ In situations like Abkhazia, the US should recognize positive steps Russia takes toward facilitating the return of IDPs and accomplishing other tasks that provide for a more lasting solution.

Analysis: Russia has frequently expressed its desire for international recognition for its significant efforts to stabilize the near abroad. In fact, recognition seems just as important to them as receiving funds for their operations.¹³¹ The US is always quick to criticize Russia when it does something wrong in

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peacekeeping operations, but they have been reluctant to give recognition for Russia's positive actions. By providing this positive recognition, the US can strengthen the US-Russian relationship and provide added incentive for Russia to undertake certain actions to help solve the various conflicts.

If the US is not cautious in how it credits the Russian forces, it may encourage heavy-handed, partial actions. In addition, the US does not want to give Russia the impression that it has a free hand in the near abroad without being scrutinized by the international community. However, up to this point the US has been hesitant to give Russia credit for its peacekeeping efforts in the near abroad.

CONCLUSION

Peacekeeping operations provide an excellent opportunity for the US and Russia to improve their strategic relationship. The most likely areas where the US can facilitate the US-Russian relationship in peacekeeping are by improving combined operations in the Balkans and supporting Russian peacekeeping operations in the near abroad. While the US should be careful not to exaggerate the impact this cooperation can have on the relationship, it should commit itself to making the best possible strategic use of these peacekeeping operations and providing the necessary resources to accomplish that goal. This paper has provided several recommendations for improving US-Russian relations through these peacekeeping operations. By making efforts to improve the relationship now, when a new Russian administration may be willing to make policy changes, the US can avoid future conflicts and pave the way for future cooperation with Russia.

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